

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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All articles for the March 2023 newsletter, must be submitted to: icrowmermel@gmail.com by February 21, 2023.

Lessons Learned from a Backyard Prairie by Fred Delcomyn and James Ellis

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82981179997?pwd=aINPR3hZSTJnaOUxQnVNUWt5aXc5UT09>



Fred Delcomyn and James Ellis

In 2003 Fred Delcomyn imagined his central Illinois backyard of two and a half acres, farmed many years for corn and soybeans, restored to tallgrass prairie.

Over the next seventeen years, Delcomyn, with the help of James Ellis planned, planted seeds, photographed, and burned these acres to reconstruct a prairie. In this program, Delcomyn and Ellis will recount the lessons learned about prairie restoration through photographs and stories that they chronicle in their 2021 book, *A Backyard Prairie: The Hidden Beauty of Tallgrass and Wildflowers*, published by Southern Illinois University Press. Read more about our speakers Fred Delcomyn and James Ellis on page 2.

This event can be streamed online through the Zoom link above. The video recording of the meeting will be posted on the website shortly after the program. There will be no in-person meeting this month. The program is FREE and open to the public. For more information call Jerry Paulson, 815-222-4414.

Our Meetings

As 2023 begins, we are returning to virtual programs during the winter months due to the high rate of COVID and RSV infections in the area, and to avoid driving during wintry weather. We hope to be able to return to in-person programs again in the spring. Most of our recorded zoom programs will be available as a YouTube video after the program.

Photo credit: the photo above was taken by L. Brian Stauffer, staff photographer for the University of Illinois News Bureau (retired) associated with this article: <https://news.illinois.edu/view/6367/1947124203>.

Message from the President Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

The speaker for our January program highlighted the plight of monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Sara Dykman, author of *Bicycling with Butterflies*, urged us to plant milkweed and other native wildflowers to help monarchs and other pollinators.

As I write this article, we are waiting to learn the fate of Bell Bowl Prairie, located on the grounds of the Chicago-Rockford Airport, and the population of rusty patched bumble bees that are known to use the prairie for foraging.

At the November meeting, we had our annual seed exchange. This year a lot of milkweed seeds were left, and I decided to put these and the other extra wildflower seeds in a field located across the Kishwaukee River from Bell Bowl Prairie that is being planted for pollinators as a Conservation Reserve Program project. The land is owned by the private foundation that I work for. We



Milkweed pods. Photo by Jessie Crow Mermel

hope that the CRP field enhanced by wildflowers grown from the seeds donated by Wild Ones of Rock River Valley members will eventually attract monarch butterflies and rusty patched bumble bees. The Xerces Society website (<https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/pollinator-friendly-plant-lists>) provides a list of native plants by region that provide nectar for pollinators, like rusty patched bumble bees.

Plants for our annual Native Plant Sale have been ordered and plans are being made for the sale day in May. This is our most significant source of funds for the chapter and gets thousands of native plants friendly to pollinators planted in hundreds of private gardens and public areas. You will soon be getting a call asking you to volunteer during the plant sale week doing one of the many tasks ranging from unloading flats of plants, to helping buyers select the right plant from their yard. Please say “yes” when you get a call or email.

Most of us can't ride 10,000 miles to educate people about monarch butterflies, but we can do what we can to provide food and habitat for butterflies and other pollinators in our yards.

About Our Speakers

Fred Delcomyn, a professor emeritus of the School of Integrative Biology at the University of Illinois, is the author of more than 100 popular and scientific articles. Since 2009, he has served on the board of directors of Grand Prairie Friends, a not-for-profit conservation organization and land trust involved with natural areas protection and restoration in east-central Illinois. He completed training as a Master Naturalist in 2017, and his writing and photography are often featured in Field Notes, the quarterly newsletter of the East Central Illinois Master Naturalist program.

James “Jamie” Ellis works as the Natural Areas

Coordinator for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where he manages, maintains, and coordinates access to about 1,000 acres of



property set aside for teaching and research. Trained as a botanist and plant ecologist, he has published articles and presented talks on prairie ecology, conservation, and management for both academic and general audiences. He is a member of and volunteer with Grand Prairie Friends where he served on the board of directors from 2000-2021. *A Backyard Prairie*

can be ordered from Southern Illinois University Press: <http://www.siupress.com/books/978-0-8093-3818-4>.

A Passion for Butterflies (and Frogs) Mark Luthin

January Program Recap

Sara Dykman, author of *Bicycling with Butterflies*, began January's program by showing a map of her route following the migration of monarchs which started and ended in Mexico. She headed north through the midwest, followed the monarchs up into Canada, hit the east coast of the US, and went back to the midwest before turning south towards Mexico. The journey took Sara about 9 months to complete and covered over 10,200 miles. Oh, and she did it on a bicycle!

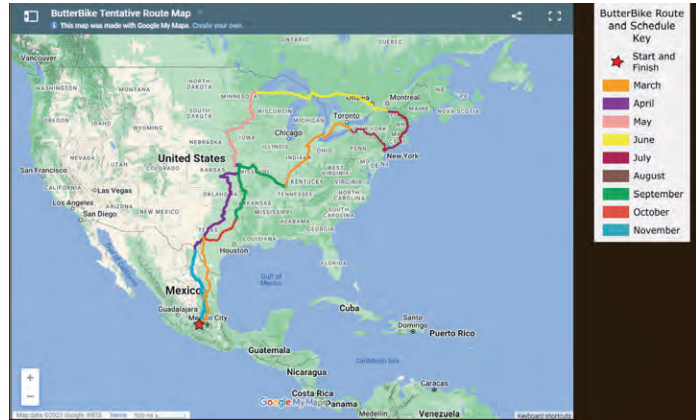
Sara admitted that her knowledge of monarchs, and their migration, was limited at the beginning of her journey. Her true passion is frogs, but since their migration is measured in feet rather than miles, Sara chose to follow the monarchs. She had no plans of where she would go and where she would stay on her adventure, rather she let the



Sara Dykman

monarchs guide her. As word of her travels spread, Sara was contacted by a variety of schools, clubs, and other organizations to speak about her journey. She honored as many requests as possible, pedaling her bike and speaking to hundreds of groups.

Mile after mile, as Sara pedaled, she "looked at the world through the lens of a monarch" and grew increasingly frustrated and angry. In the desire to have well-manicured lawns and mowed roadsides, we have deprived the monarch (and most other pollinators) of their food sources. As mentioned, Sara's true passion is frogs, but she also understands that if "you protect frogs, you protect butterflies" (and vice versa), which helps the whole system maintain its health.



Sara's interactive bicycle map can be found on her website at www.beyondabook.org

If you missed the program, it was recorded and posted on the Wild Ones website found at www.wildonesrrvc.org/Monthly_Meetings.html. If you haven't yet read Sara's book, *Bicycling with Butterflies*, I would encourage you to put it on your reading list. You won't be disappointed. You can also learn more about Sara's journey and her work by visiting her website: www.beyondabook.org. For those interested in supporting Sara's work of educating children about monarchs, you can donate on her website: www.beyondabook.org/support.



"One butterfly can't bend a branch, but thousands can".

- Sara Dykman

Photo by Jean Beaufort via public domain images

Wild Ones Garden Designs Website

The Wild Ones Garden Designs site provides practical, educationally-sound information on native landscaping developed specifically for first-time native plant gardeners looking for help getting started.

The site also features a growing number of free, downloadable native garden designs created by professional landscape designers for multiple ecoregions in the United States, taking into account various light, soil and moisture conditions.

A plant list accompanies each design and provides a quick preview of the diversity and beauty of the native plants incorporated in each design. Both the designs and the plant lists are printer-friendly. To see all garden designs, visit: <https://nativegardendesigns.wildones.org/>

About the Chicago Designer: Designer Monica Buckley's childhood home featured an organic garden, a big compost pile, and rows of her dad's irises, bred and grown for show. The garden was a source of wonder, but true entrancement took hold when a kid from her block showed her caterpillars, chrysalises and cocoons, and shared the names of



butterflies, moths, and the plants their larvae needed to eat. That sense of the interconnectedness of nature colored her world, and after a career in publishing, Monica decided to follow her original passion. After several years of classes from The Morton Arboretum and the Chicago Botanic Garden and with encouragement from her mentor, Art

Gara, she took the leap in 2013. Her company, Red Stem Native Landscapes, designs, builds and cares for native plant gardens in and around Chicago. View the Chicago design resources here: <https://nativegardendesigns.wildones.org/designs/chicago/>

In My Yard Jane Evans



Ernest Chapman

My mother had a gentleman visitor. His face was deeply lined from years of living, as were his shoes densely dusted from years of walking through woods and fields. We had just moved to Ohio into a new subdivision and this elderly man, born in 1874, was bringing my mom a clump of bellwort which he had saved from the bulldozers. His name was Ernest Chapman, 5th cousin to John Chapman, also known as Johnny Appleseed.

My mom so revered that clump of bellwort that she took it with them when they moved to Michigan and then again when they moved to assisted living where they could garden a small patch right outside their door. Later it moved to our home in Illinois.

Bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*) is a woodland

plant about 1' to 2' tall and is a member of the lily family. It spreads to make nice clumps and blooms early in spring providing food for emerging bees with its yellow blossoms. We will have bellwort and other woodland plants available at the plant sale.



Bellwort photo by Jane Evans.

Membership Update Sallie Krebs, Membership Coordinator

A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org). Click on Join/Renew under the Membership tab. You can renew (or join) with any major credit card through PayPal (no PayPal account required) by using our website. We appreciate your support!

174 memberships as of February 25, 2023

22 attended the January Zoom Meeting

Special thanks to our members who made contributions above the basic \$40 dues!

Ted Ross, Arlington Heights

Returning Members:

Alice Fox & Ron Holm, Loves Park

New members are identified with a green ribbon on their meeting name badges. Please introduce yourself to them and help us welcome all new members to our great chapter!

Anniversaries:

5 Years:

Peggy Hoover-Wehrle, Rockford

Thomas & Nancy Mangan, Clare

Thank you for your continuing support!

It is preferred that renewal memberships be submitted through the Member Center online

rather than by check for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. To renew your Wild Ones membership Log in or contact support@wildones.org for more information. Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter above your name on the label. You will receive several emails from the Wild Ones national organization prior to your expiration date. If you want to join Wild Ones as a new member go to the Member Center. Remember that your dues include membership in both National Wild Ones and our chapter. If you need to mail a check, please use the address below:

WILD ONES

ATTN: MEMBERSHIP

2285 BUTTE DES MORTS BEACH RD

NEENAH, WI 54912-1274

A portion of all dues paid is returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. National Wild Ones provides liability insurance for our meetings and events. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Please send address and email address changes to the Membership Coordinator: Sallie Krebs
Email: membershipworrvc@gmail.com or call (815) 540-4730 if you have any questions about membership. Wild Ones Annual Memberships: Household \$40,

Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$25,

Affiliate Non-Profit Organization \$90,

Business \$250.



Get more involved with your Wild Ones Chapter!
We are looking for people to offer their talents and time with the following positions:

President (in 2024)
Treasurer
Booth Coordinator

Mentor Coordinator
Board Member-at-Large



NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Sallie Krebs

1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104

PMB 233

Rockford, IL 61107

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 02/1/2023, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last Wild Ones Journal until you renew your membership. National Wild Ones drops expired memberships the first week of the expiration month, so please don't be late! See the Membership Update for renewal information.

Mail your renewal to:

Sallie Krebs

Wild Ones Rock River Valley

7492 Renfro Rd.

Cherry Valley, IL 61016



Wild Ones Mission

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

Rock River Valley Chapter Meetings

Our regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month. We are live streaming the programs over ZOOM and posting recordings on YouTube. Links to the meetings and programs are posted on our website and our Facebook page, and sent to members via email the week of the meeting. If you want to receive the link send an email to: janetgiesen@gmail.com.

Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators

BOARD

President: Jerry Paulson

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649.3966 greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com

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Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912

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Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044

kimlowvol@aol.com

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]

Facebook coordinator: Dawn Skupien

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Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson

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Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs

membershipworrvc@gmail.com

Mentor coordinator: [open position]

Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell

(815) 969.7435 cynthiachmell@gmail.com

Native plant sale coordinators: Janet Giesen (as to the left)

Jane Evans (815) 494.7731

Ginnie Watson (as above)

Cynthia Nelson cnelson18@niu.edu

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Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412

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Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)

Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien (as to the left)

Show Me/Help Me coordinator:

Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)

Tree & shrub sale coordinator: Brian Hale

(815) 289.2384 treeandshrubsale@gmail.com

Volunteer coordinator: Cynthia Nelson (as to the left)

Website coordinator: Janet Giesen (as to the left)

Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)